EXTREMISM

CEP CALLS FOR TURKEY TO END SUPPORT FOR HAMAS OR FACE NATO EXPULSION

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(New York, N.Y.) — On Friday, Counter Extremism Project (CEP) Chief Executive Officer Ambassador Mark D. Wallace called on Turkey to end long-standing diplomatic and financial support to the terrorist group Hamas. Meanwhile, President Erdogan and the government in Ankara is allowing Hamas free reign in Turkey through explicit political cover and must correct course. Failure to do so should trigger expulsion from NATO.

On Wednesday, the U.S. and the UK rightly sanctioned several Turkey-based individuals that are helping to manage the finances of the Palestinian terrorist group. This follows U.S. sanctions in October targeting three principals of Turkey's Trend GYO company, which plays a major role in Hamas' $700 million overseas economic empire.

However, occasional sanctions on individual Hamas operatives and entities in Turkey will not address the root of the problem until President Erdogan understands – or is forced to understand – that it is no longer acceptable to support Hamas, the group that perpeterated the atrocity of October 7 in which 1,200 people were massacred and more than 200 abducted into Hamas-controlled Gaza. Just yesterday, Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark arrested suspected Hamas operatives plotting attacks on Jewish targets.

Ambassador Wallace stated:

"Turkey's crucial support to Hamas is unacceptable. There can be no more

business as usual with Turkey until it ends its political, financial and rhetorical support for Hamas. Rather than hosting and feting Haniyeh inside Turkey after October 7, President Erdogan order his immediate detention and remand him into U.S. or Israeli custody. Likewise with other senior officials including Meshaal and al-Arouri. If Turkey will not change, then it will be incumbent upon the United States and NATO allies to enforce a change, including the threat of expulsion from NATO."

Turkey is a partner of Hamas as well as regular staging-post for meetings with senior Hamas leaders, while President Erdogan and Ismayel Haniyeh are in regular and close contact. Erdogan has additionally met former Hamas chief Khaled Meshaal and Deputy Chair of the Political Bureau Saleh al-Arouri – who like Haniyeh has a Turkish passport – many times. Hamas also operates a headquarters based in Istanbul.

Ambassador Wallace added:

"I commend this most recent round of sanctions aimed at degrading Hamas' financing. As Undersecretary Nelson noted in his comments accompanying Wednesday's designation, our NATO ally Turkey has proven itself a regrettably permissive environment for financing and otherwise supporting Hamas, notably

via the terrorist group's vast real estate empire and Istanbul headquarters. However, this is only the tip of the iceberg. Turkey is home to scores of Hamas operatives providing critical revenues to the terrorist group, which continues to hold approximately 140 innocent people hostage in Gaza after the October 7 atrocity. Ankara must be held to account."

While given extensive support in countries including Turkey and Qatar – where it is not classified as a terrorist organization – Hamas is variously subject to outright or partial bans, assets freezes, and other proscriptions in the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Israel, Egypt, Jordan, Japan, Paraguay, and the United Kingdom.

To read CEP's report on Hamas, click **here**.

To read CEP's October 30, 2023 statement on Trend GYO, click **here**.

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